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ABSTRACT

There is agreement among most physical education professionals that the quality of graduate programs in physical education must be more closely monitored. There is general agreement that graduate degree programs in physical education are being offered by some institutions that have inadequate faculties, inadequate facilities, and inadequate curricula. A common body of knowledge to unify curricular programs is needed, but there is little agreement on what it should be. Many fear that accreditation standards might destroy creative approaches to graduate study, and it is agreed that accreditation is expensive. Specialized licensure in physical education skills is gaining great momentum in the profession. Unified support of specialized certification might provide an opportunity to direct it toward a positive aspect of professional physical education preparation programs. It would then be possible to move toward the development of state examinations for both the body of knowledge and performance skills. Unified support for accreditation would make it possible to address standards for programs of professional preparation. (JD)

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"I KNOW YOU'RE CERTIFIED, BUT
WHAT CAN YOU TEACH?"

P. Stanley Brassie

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"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times" is the famous beginning line of Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities. This would appear to be a prophecy which challenges those of us involved in teacher education today. It is the best of times in the sense that education, even higher education is considered a necessity not a luxury. Huge percentages of local, state, and federal tax dollars are spent each year to support the educational enterprise. Never has education, from the womb to the tomb, been more a part of a society's culture. It also seems to be the worst of times in the sense that never has education been under such severe scrutiny and criticism. The public schools have been blamed for failing to properly educate our children. College and universities have been blamed for inadequately preparing young men and women to become effective teachers in the schools. Colleges and universities place blame on the decreasing quality of the students they are able to recruit for teaching. They cite poor teacher's salaries, poor working environments in the schools, and lack of administrative and parental support as reasons why talented and intelligent young people avoid teacher education. It is a vicious circle which seems to perpetuate mediocrity and inferiority.

Let's cite a few examples of our dilemma. A 1979 headline in the Dallas Times Herald stated "Fifty percent of Dallas Independent School District Teachers Fail to Pass Test." The wire services relayed this indictment to much of the civilized world.

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Poor Dallas! Twenty years in court over desegregation and busing, and now this. The Wesman Personnel Classification Test was given not to all Dallas teachers, but to 535 first-year teachers. Half fell below the score considered acceptable by the Dallas Independent School District -- and that standard itself was far from rigorous. The teachers were considerably outperformed on the same test by a volunteer group of juniors and seniors from Jesuit College Preparatory School, a private high school in North Dallas.

Less well publicized, but equally disturbing, was the Houston Independent School District's discovery at about the same time that fully half its teacher applicants scored lower in mathematical achievement than the average high school junior; about a third were similarly defective in using the English language. The article went on to state, and I quote, "How can this be? Texas spends a staggering amount of money on education -- more than half the state budget, or \$4 billion in 1978. And that doesn't include another \$397 million in federal funds. What are we getting for our dollars? What happened to the era, not so long ago, really, when teachers were rightfully respected as the best-educated people in the community? And now they can't out-perform high school juniors. How has it come to this? Everybody has a suspect: integration, segregation, permissiveness, regimentation, the Viet Nam War, drugs, television, divorce, the suburbs, the inner city -- everything but sunspots and the phases of the moon. Conditioned by decades of propaganda from professional educators, we indict society, which cannot defend itself. But the educators themselves are largely to blame, and in particular the teacher colleges, which are their single most harmful creation. They turn out hordes of certified ignoramuses whose incompetence in turn becomes evidence that the teacher colleges and the educators need yet more money and more power.

Under pressure from taxpayers and the federal courts, the Dallas Independent School District resorted to the Wesman test because it has learned that the teacher colleges cannot be trusted. Transcripts are a sham; letters of recommendation are promiscuous. Certified teachers are pouring out of 63 Texas colleges like the mops and water buckets that overwhelmed poor Mickey Mouse in Disney's Fantasia. How did such incompetents gain Texas teaching certificates? What on earth did they do in college?"¹

One of the realities we seldom consider is that we, the faculties of colleges with teacher preparation programs, have been legally granted a monopoly in the preparation of teachers in a state. No one may teach unless they graduate from our programs approved by the state. We have direct control over the quality of the product which will serve society in the public schools. For years we have set the standards.

In Texas there is no standard for teacher certification other than the completion of a bachelor's degree with the required number of education courses. As matters stand, no graduate of a TEA-approved teacher-training program, no matter how incompetent, is excluded from the profession. There is no test, no qualifying exam. Nobody else, no matter how learned or capable, is admitted into the profession.

Because we have failed to exercise our responsibilities as seriously as we should, our monopoly is being challenged by parents, school administrators, and legislators. One by one states are adopting exit examinations in which the competency of teacher education graduates will be measured. Unless these graduates meet minimum competency levels they will not be certified, i.e., be allowed to practice their profession. Most educators accept the philosophical basis for the state exit examination required for certification, but there has been a heated discussion on what exit competencies are needed and how they can

be measured with reasonable validity. What is more distressing, in my opinion, is that a state test must assume a role that we have been unwilling to assume as educators.

In physical education specifically, we are observing not only the general trend I've just described, but some additional controls as well. Before discussing them, I'd like to differentiate between three terms which may be confusing to some of you.

(1) CERTIFICATION - is awarded by an organization of professionals to an individual who meets minimum competency levels in the professional group's area of expertise. It serves to assure or guarantee to a consumer of that service that the professionals who provide this service recognize this person as a fellow or colleague.²

(2) LICENSURE - is a legal authority to enter a profession and to continue practicing that profession. It is given by a government body to protect the consumer of those services from unqualified professionals rendering those services. Since it is a legal authority, those who practice the service without a license are, in most cases, deemed to be breaking the law and are subject to penalty. Licensure is usually awarded for services where the public health and welfare of the consumer is at stake.

Licensure legally defines the parameters of a profession. It clearly identifies what the licensee can do and cannot do. It clearly delineates who can receive the services provided. It also limits the licensee to where he/she may practice.³

(3) ACCREDITATION - is concerned with the "process" or the program being implemented by an institution. No specific attempt is made to evaluate the product of the program. Accreditation is a process whereby an association or agency recognizes an institution as having met certain predetermined qualifi-

cations and standards developed by the profession. The two processes basic to all accreditation are institutional self-study by the faculty of the institution and evaluation by professional peers from outside the institution accomplished through on-site visitation and a formal visitor's report.⁴

Both the external pressures from the public and internal pressures from the school administrators are stimulating our profession, health education, and physical education to seriously consider participation in all three: CERTIFICATION, LICENSURE, and ACCREDITATION. I would like to share what has evolved the last ten years, what is presently occurring, and what we might expect in the next decade.

CERTIFICATION - State Teaching Certification is certainly not foreign to our profession. Each of the states has been certifying health and physical education teachers for quite some time. What does that certification, awarded by the state, mean to the public schools and to the public, our ultimate consumer. It means that we as a profession assure or guarantee that this individual has met the minimal competency to teach our discipline in the schools. We further recognize this individual as a fellow or colleague.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But, we are discovering that our consumers, the public secondary schools, the colleges, and the general public are no longer willing to accept state teaching certification as an exclusive measure of competency. Let's try to identify some reasons for this. To do this, we must be introspective:

(1) The diversity of our curricula in the secondary and colleges. I am personally aware of secondary schools who are teaching scuba diving, martial arts, springboard diving, riflery, fly and bait casting, canoeing, roller and ice skating, rapelling, camping, outdoor education, cycling, cross-country skiing, rugby, etc. Many are teaching these and the more traditional activi-

ties at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. In addition to activities, other colleges and university physical education teachers are teaching anthropology, history, psychology, sociology, physiology, and biomechanics of exercise and sport.

(2) Coupled with diversity in curriculum, our profession has continued to perpetuate the premise that a good teacher can teach any content in our discipline successfully with a little brushing up. We may be willing to accept that premise -- but our consumers are not. We are living in an age of specialization in which competency and accountability are the expectation, not the exception.

(3) We have also been one of the few professions who have subjugated the skill/performance aspect of our discipline to the supporting pedagogical and cognitive aspects. After 80 years of John Dewey's arguments of student-centered rather than subject-centered approaches to learning, schools of education stress method over subject matter so that we spend all our time on how to teach rather than what to teach. Although our new professionals have far more extensive insight into the scholarly body of knowledge our discipline embraces, most are not very skilled, not very fit, and not very interested in expanding the breadth and depth of their personal performance of sports skills.

The public sector's continued insistence upon physical educator's who are highly skilled and fit performers has largely been ignored. As a result, we are beginning to see a strong interest by the consumer in specialized certification agencies which guarantee both a skill/performance base as well as a knowledge base. Most of us are well aware of the (1) American Red Cross Certifications in Lifesaving and W.S.I. We may also be aware of (2) PADI and NAUI's three levels of certification in scuba diving, (3) certification belts in the martial arts. Certifications are already expanding into skiing, gymnastics,

riflery, mountain climbing, and golf. The USLTA is talking about certification of tennis instructors, the USTFA is considering certification for track and field, the cycling association is discussing certification. All of these agencies place a heavy emphasis on performance competency in addition to knowledge. How long will it be until we have agencies certifying basketball instructors, volleyball instructors, jogging instructors, and softball instructors. As this continues I predict that before long our professional preparation programs will consist of a general pedagogical and support core with students attempting to acquire as many professional certifications as possible both inside and outside the colleges and universities.

We are also seeing the proliferation of certification in the scholarly discipline. We have certification for trainers; certification for coaches; three levels of ACSM certification for exercise technicians, exercise specialists, and program directors; certification for gerontology specialists; certification for sport psychologists, adapted specialists, etc. Although this is happening all around us, I've not heard anyone raise the issue as a concern in our profession. It is obvious to me that such a trend will hasten total fragmentation of our discipline. Have we thought about the implications?

LICENSURE - Licensure is a rather new concept for our profession, but we are making inroads. Licensure is a legal authority given by a government body to practice a profession. It serves to protect the public from unqualified professionals practicing and providing those services. Licensure, once approved by a government body, is granted to individuals who meet specified pre-requisite criteria (including experience), who pass a rigid comprehensive examination on the body of knowledge, and who successfully demonstrate performance of applied skills in a practical examination.

The NATA currently has attained licensure in three states, including Georgia, and is currently engaged in various stages of governmental approval in 28 more states. The ACSM will undoubtedly move toward licensure with the exercise technician, specialist, and director certifications.

The general public is beginning to press legislators to consider the licensing of teachers for public schools and colleges/universities. This would differ from our present certification in the following ways.

(1) The state legislature would determine by law what is required to license a teacher: a) pre-requisite criteria (level of education, experience, etc.); b) body of knowledge required; c) competency in performance.

(2) No specified curriculum required as a pre-requisite for licensure exam.

(3) No guarantee that any student in any curriculum would be licensed. Individual responsibilities for his/her own destiny.

Many feel this would considerably strengthen the teaching profession by eliminating the incompetent teachers being graduated by teacher education programs today. For example, an article that appeared in the Texas Monthly stated, "Entrance to other professions--medicine, law, architecture, accountancy--is achieved only after passing licensing exams. Why not teaching?"

When other states tried licensing exams, the National Education Association's response was predictable. It sued South Carolina for using the National Teacher Examination as one of a number of guidelines for approving or disapproving the certification of teachers. Fortunately, the NEA lost; the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in January 1978 that the NTE creates classifications on permissible bases--knowledge, skill and ability--and that they are not used with any intent to discriminate.

The monopoly of the education schools must be broken; there must be other paths to certification. Since teaching is a pragmatic art best learned by experience, school districts should establish apprenticeship programs for people who can satisfy the literacy requirements and show a command of subject matter.

The education schools will never improve substantially without competition. Opening up the profession would not only save money that now sustains the Educationists' empires, but could also help bring into the public schools considerable numbers of persons who chose an education over certification to begin with. It might also go a long way toward restoring the dignity of what is, after all, one of the most decent of professions."⁵

ACCREDITATION - Accreditation is certainly not a new concept in education or even in teacher education, but it is rather new for physical education. Accreditation concerns itself with process, not product. It is concerned with programs in an educational institution. It is granted when a professional organization or agency recognizes an institution as having met predetermined qualifications and standards developed by a profession. There are two major classifications of accreditation: (1) institutional and (2) programmatic accreditation. Most institutions, secondary schools and colleges here today are accredited by one of the regional accrediting associations. This is an example of institutional accreditation. If your college institution is involved in teacher education, it may also be accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. NCATE is an example of programmatic type of accreditation, although it is a broadly based programmatic type.

Many disciplines similar in scope to our own have developed more specific types of programmatic accreditation. Included in these are: ART, BUSINESS,

CHEMISTRY, HOME ECONOMICS, JOURNALISM, LIBRARIANSHIP, MUSIC, PSYCHOLOGY, THEOLOGY, and, of course, RECREATION, one of our constituent disciplines.

Accreditation has been a topic of discussion among leaders in our profession for at least three decades. Its consideration has been renewed recently by NASPE who is supporting a 3-4 year study of the process and its potential for graduate study in physical education. The two committees working on the project, one developing standards for accrediting institutions, and the second, considering the financial feasibility of accreditation, presented a report at a pre-convention conference in Detroit last week. I would like to share perceptions of the response of professionals attending that meeting:

(1) Most seem to agree that we must more closely monitor the quality of graduate programs in physical education. There was general agreement that graduate degree programs in physical education are being offered by some institutions that have inadequate faculties, inadequate facilities, and inadequate curricula.

(2) Most seem to agree that we desperately need a common body of knowledge to unify our curricular programs, but there is little agreement on what that should be.

(3) Many fear that accreditation standards might destroy creative approaches to graduate study.

(4) Most agree that accreditation is expensive.

So, we are faced with a critical decision as a profession.

(1) If we remain passive -- specialized certification which is gaining great momentum will dominate our future.

(2) If we support specialized certification we might be able to direct it toward a positive aspect of our professional preparation programs.

(3) If we support licensure, we can move toward the development of state examinations for both the body of knowledge and performance. Any person with any major who can pass those tests will be licensed to teach physical education.

(4) If we support accreditation, we can address standards for our programs of professional preparation.

The choice is ours -- what shall we do? If we do nothing, we are making a decision based upon a current course of action. Is that what we want?

The public, school administrators, and legislators want accountability. They will continue to encroach on quality control until we provide a product which will serve the schools well. In physical education, they will demand a product who is skilled, who personifies physical fitness, and who can provide an organized learning environment where movement and skills can be taught. We need to prepare professionals whom we can identify as being competent to handle specific teaching assignments. Principals and Superintendents will continue to ask, "I know you're certified, but what can you teach?" We must design our programs so that our products can respond with confidence that they do have specific competencies.

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